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THE  
Whitman College  
Quarterly

the Story of Marcus Whitman

[Reprint from Vol. I, No. 1, January, 1897]

Vol. XII, No. 4  
October  
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PUBLISHED BY WHITMAN COLLEGE

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# THE WHITMAN COLLEGE QUARTERLY

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A Magazine published every three months in the interests of Whitman College and the Northwest

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*All communications should be addressed to the Editor of the Whitman College Quarterly*

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## A NEW CHAPTER IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

IN the early part of the nineteenth century a trapper of the American Fur Company who had made his way from the Rocky Mountains into the Northwest spent the night with a tribe of Flathead Indians. When bed time came, the Indians saw him take out of the inner pocket of his hunting jacket a little book, and slowly turn over its leaves, as his eyes traversed its pages. They had never seen a book before. Then they watched him as he closed his eyes, and they saw his lips move, it seemed to them as though in some strange incantation. They had never known what prayer was. They asked him what was the meaning of those things which he did, and he told them that the little book which he held in his hands was the white man's book which showed the way to the better land; that in the East, whence he had come, there was knowledge of the white man's God, to whom he had been praying. The news spread fast from campfire to campfire. It was discussed by the whole tribe. The Indians resolved at last to send an embassy of their most honored chieftains east across the mountains to bring back knowledge of that white man's book of heaven. In 1832 four Indian chieftains entered St. Louis. They were ambassadors of their tribe. They made their way to General Clark, the officer in command of the United States army post, but he did not give them what they had come for. He loaded them with presents; he showed them places of entertainment, and the public buildings; but the purpose of their journey was not answered. The two old chiefs died in St. Louis, and were buried. The two young men at last decided to return, but before they left, one of them made a farewell

address in General Clark's office, which expressed the sorrow of a breaking heart. His words were these:

"I came to you over the trail of many moons from the setting sun; you were the friends of my fathers, who have all gone the long way. I came, with one eye partly open, for more light to my people who sit in darkness. I will go back with both eyes closed. How can I go back blind, to my blind people? I made my way to you with strong arms, through many enemies and strange lands, that I might carry back much to them. I go back with both arms broken and empty. The two fathers who came with us, the braves of many winters and wars, we leave asleep by your great water and wigwams. They were tired in many moons, and their moccasins wore out. My people sent me to get the white man's book of heaven, but I have not found it. I am going back the long, sad trail to my people of the dark land. You make my feet heavy with the burden of gifts, and my moccasins will grow old in carrying them, but the book is not among them. When, after one more snow, I tell my poor blind people in the big council that I did not bring the book, no word will be spoken by our old men, or by our young braves. One by one they will rise up and go out in silence. My people will die in darkness, and they will go on the long path to the other hunting grounds. No white man will go with them, and no white man's book will make the way plain. I have spoken."

It was a cry to God for help, and it seemed as though God were deaf. For year after year went by, and no light flashed for them from the heavens, no voice spoke to them of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. But God uses strange means. There was a young clerk in General Clark's office who heard that farewell speech. He wrote it down in a letter which he sent to his family living in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. The letter was published, and the news spread far and wide that the Indians of Oregon Territory were asking for the Gospel. The news came to Jason Lee in 1834, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, to its eternal glory, commissioned him immediately to carry the Gospel to them. "But that is another story." The news came to the Rev. Samuel Parker, pastor of the

Presbyterian Church in Ithaca, New York, and he applied to the Foreign Missionary Society of his church, the American Board in Boston, to be sent to them, but that society hesitated to invade an unknown region.

Through Mr. Parker the word came at last to the ears and to the heart of a young doctor living in western New York State. When Marcus Whitman heard this cry of need, he heard it as the voice of God, and said, "Here am I, send me." Starting in 1835 with Rev. Samuel Parker, under a commission from the American Board, he reached the head waters of the Missouri, but realizing the magnitude of the task before him, turned back to the East for recruits. In the summer of 1836 a little party of five missionaries, Dr. Whitman and his wife, Henry H. Spaulding and his wife, and William H. Gray, made their way across the continent to Oregon Territory. When Mrs. Spaulding, who was an invalid, was told that she could never stand the hardships of that journey on horseback, she replied, "What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart? I am ready not to be bound only, but also to suffer death on the Rocky Mountains for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Is there a more romantic incident in our nation's history than that which occurred on the Fourth of July of that same year, 1836? Month after month the little band of missionaries had made their toilsome way steadily westward. At last they have reached the summit of the Rocky Mountains, and see for the first time the western divide. As they gaze upon the strange, wild land to which God is calling them, they take out of their battered, canvas-covered wagon a United States flag and unfurl it to the western breeze. They open their Bible and kneel around it in the grass, and then with prayer and praise, with our country's flag floating over them, and on that, our nation's birthday, they take possession of the whole Pacific Coast in the name of God and of the United States. It is said that carved in the rock of that same South Pass there may be seen today the name of Fremont, known as "The Pathfinder of the Rockies," and under it the date, 1843. But seven years before General Fremont, with his escort of United States troops, ever saw that pass, five Christian missionaries, two of them Christian women,



had gone through to take possession of the land for God and for our country.

The little party plunged down the western slope, through the defiles and fastnesses of the mountains, along a narrow horse trail which lay winding through the wilderness. And Dr. Whitman persisted in dragging with him their canvas-covered wagon. The Hudson's Bay Company traders tried to stop him. They knew that if American wagons succeeded in passing the Rocky Mountains the land would be lost to Great Britain. Up to this time they had succeeded in stopping every wagon. But Whitman was not to be deceived. Despite their urgent protestations and the advice even of his companions, he persisted in taking the wagon. It broke down, but he reduced it to a two-wheeled cart, and dragged it on. It was impossible to haul it by horse along the narrow trail, but fastening a rope to the pole, he dragged it on by hand. Mrs. Whitman, in her diary, tells how seven times in one morning the wagon went rolling down the sides of the canyon into the stream below, yet still the doctor persevered—filled with madness, as his friends thought, but an inspired madness, as the sequel proved. Passing over the plains of Utah and southern Idaho, through eastern Oregon, they came over the Blue Mountains into the Columbia River valley, and there, at Waiilatpu, four miles west of the present city of Walla Walla, Whitman established their home among the Cayuse Indians, while Spaulding and his wife proceeded up the Snake River to Lapwai among the Nez Percés Indians. An American traveler visited the Mission station three years after Marcus Whitman had settled there. He found that in that time Dr. Whitman had, with his own hands, erected three buildings besides the school house, was engaged in constructing a grist mill, had himself fenced in 260 acres of the surrounding prairie land never tilled before, had plowed, harrowed and seeded it with the first crops which were ever raised by an American west of the Rocky Mountains, had learned the Indian language, and had assisted his wife to teach the Indian boys and girls who came thronging to the little school house, while he had acted as physician and surgeon for the region three hundred miles about. Can that schoolhouse, that grist mill, that medical missionary



ever be forgotten? That Christian home was the first known to the history of the Pacific Coast.

In those early days Oregon Territory was an unknown land. American statesmen regarded it as a wilderness of sage brush and sand, worthless for the purposes of civilization. Daniel Webster, in the Senate in 1825, had said that he would never vote an appropriation of a single cent to bring the Pacific Coast one inch nearer Boston than it then was. McDuffie had sneered at the land as not worth one single pinch of snuff, and Benton, in the United States Senate, had said that God had set the Stony Mountains to be the natural western boundary of the United States, and he hoped to God that they would always remain so.\* We got our information in those days from the British Hudson's Bay Fur Company. For many years its trappers and traders had been deriving a revenue of hundreds of thousands of pounds in trade with the Indians for furs and skins. Through the *London Examiner*, by way of England, they announced to our Government that the land would never be of value to the United States. The Northwest boundary line had never been determined, and the land was held under a provision for joint occupancy until the line should be drawn. The missionary, Marcus Whitman, discovered the true facts in the case. He learned the amazing value of that Northwest land to the United States; of those great prairies whose fertility today challenges the admiration of the world; of those forests, which in the State of Washington alone will furnish lumber to the United States, without cutting a stick elsewhere for over a hundred years to come; of those inexhaustible deposits of coal and iron, of gold and silver, which make the Northwest a treasure-house for the nation; of those great rivers and harbors, of which Puget Sound alone will accommodate all the commerce and navies of the world. He saw the importance of this land, and its value to the nation of his birth. He resolved, God helping him, that he would prevent the blunder of giving Oregon to Great Britain.

In the fall of the year 1842 it is said that he was called to attend a patient at the Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Walla Walla,

\*Benton afterwards changed his mind.

twenty-five miles away. After attending to his patient he sat down to dinner with the traders, and while they were at the dinner table a guide came rushing in, bringing the exciting news that a party of British settlers had made their way around by the north from the Saskatchewan country, and were already upon the Columbia River, entering Oregon to seize it for Great Britain. A young Englishman who was at the table leaped to his feet in triumph and proposed the toast: "Here's to Oregon! she is ours now. The United States may whistle for her." Dr. Whitman sat silent. He knew what the words meant—the loss of Oregon and the whole Pacific Coast to the United States, the destruction of his mission, and the degradation of the Indians as well, for it had ever been the policy of the Hudson's Bay Company to keep the Indians as savages that trade might not be spoiled. As quick as he could he rose from the table, and calling for his horse, rode post haste back to the Mission at Waiilatpu. As he drew rein before the Mission gateway, he called to the missionary who was standing in the doorway:\* "Spaulding, I must go to Washington this winter." The words sounded like those of a mad man. The Mission party was quickly summoned, and Whitman laid before them his news and intention. He told how in Washington our statesmen were ignorant of the value of the Northwest, and were about to cede it to Great Britain, for the Ashburton treaty which was then under negotiation was supposed to have for its object the determining of the Northwest boundary line. He told them of the British colony which had invaded the land, and announced his purpose of starting at once for Washington to lay the facts before the American Government and save Oregon to the United States. His friends expostulated with him; it was mixing up religion and politics, they said; the American Board had not sent him out to take part in any such wild goose chase as that, and his wife besought him with tears in her eyes not to go, for it was considered almost certain death to try to cross the Rocky Mountains in the winter time. But to all their remonstrances Whitman had but a single reply. "Gentlemen," he said, "though I am a missionary, I am not

\*The story was told the writer by that missionary's son, Henry Spaulding, of Almota.

expatriated; to Washington I will go." And the next morning, within twenty-four hours of the time when he first heard of the British plot, he was in his saddle starting for Washington. As he disappeared in the mountains, his wife was left, not knowing whether she would ever see him again. Six years before she had left her father's house in New York State, a home of wealth and culture and refinement, and had been living in the wilderness for the sake of Christ. The first letters which she had received from home took two years and six months to reach her. They had gone across the Atlantic to England, had there been shipped on a sailing vessel around Cape Horn to the Sandwich Islands, had there been put on a little schooner which made one trip a year to the mouth of the Columbia River, and then found their precarious way by the hand of some stray trapper up the river to the Mission station. She never saw her home again.

But Whitman is riding eastward.

He took with him a young white man, Lovejoy, and an Indian, who professed to act as guide, though it proved that he did not know the way. They made the first three hundred and thirty miles in ten days, and came to Fort Hall, in what is now southern Idaho, commanded by an Englishman, Captain Grant. He stopped them. There was to him something suspicious in the sight of two young Americans starting to ride east when the snows were already upon the mountain tops, and he told them they could go no further. "Why not?" asked Whitman. "The Indians are on the war path along the trail in the mountains," was the reply, "and it is certain death to go further." There was at that time but one trail across the northern part of the continent, and Whitman had expected to take that trail. "You must stay here," said Captain Grant, "or turn back." "No," said Whitman; "if we can't take the regular trail, we will turn to the south and take the Santa Fe trail." It was a thousand miles out of their way over an unbroken wilderness, over mountains which white man had never seen, over rivers which white man had never crossed. But turn to the south they did, and plowed their way through deepening snows, to save Oregon Territory to the United States. Can you not see the indomitable Whitman, as he

battles his way through the snow, his great head set firm upon his broad and massive shoulders, his resolute frame nerved to a purpose which is certainly inspired of God? Once on that journey Whitman lost heart. The snows had gathered around them, and what few landmarks there were were lost to sight. They were in a canyon and they knew not whether to turn to the right hand or to the left. The doctor said at last, "Hope is gone; we might as well give up." After a minute or two of silence, the Indian exclaimed, "Look at the old pack mule; see how it is turning its head and twitching its ear, as though it wanted to go in that direction." "Well," said Whitman, "we may as well go in that direction as any other." They followed that old pack mule, and it led the little party, under the providence of God, back to where their morning camp-fire was still burning, and where they found the landmarks they had lost.

They came, so Lovejoy tells us in a letter which is still preserved—they came one day to a river six hundred feet wide, frozen one-third of the way over on either side, and with a great rushing torrent down the middle. The horses balked and refused to enter. Whitman leaped from his saddle, cut a pole eight or ten feet long in the bushes, and then, mounting, had his companions lead him to the edge and push him off into the icy current. Horse and rider sank with a splash, then rising to the surface, struck out for the opposite shore, the current bearing them diagonally down stream. The other animals followed on behind. When Whitman reached the other shore he took the pole which he carried on his shoulders, broke the loose ice on the edge and clambered out on the thick ice, hauling the horse up after him. Then mounting into his saddle, he rode on into the forest, and as he rode, the water on his clothes turned to ice, and he rode like a knight of old, clad in shining coat of mail.

Their provisions gave out; they were obliged to live on dog meat and mule meat, and at last even on the bark of cottonwood trees, but nothing daunted them. On the 3d of January, 1843, they reached Bent's Fort, on the Arkansas River, Whitman's face, hands, and feet frozen, but with a clear trail east towards Washington. The Indian and Lovejoy were too exhausted to go further. Whitman did not stop a single day, but calling for a fresh horse, rode eastward,



knowing that the fate of an empire was hanging at his saddlebow.

And now, as he rode, he began to meet American settlers, who were then pouring into the Mississippi valley. He told them of the fertility of Oregon; of its amazing natural resources, and promised to lead back a wagon train of settlers the coming summer. Lovejoy stayed behind and scattered handbills, some of which are known to have reached even down into Texas, preparing for the emigration. But Whitman was riding steadily eastward on his nobler mission. It was on the 3d of March, 1843, when Whitman reached Washington, five months to the day from the time when he left Waiilatpu. The journey now is one of five days in a palace car. It took Whitman five months to ride that four thousand miles, three thousand of it on horseback. And when he reached Washington and made his way to Daniel Webster, then Secretary of State, he found that Webster was engaged in a project to trade Oregon Territory to Great Britain and would not listen to his story. Baffled, yet not disheartened, he went to see President Tyler. Tyler was more impressed. "The man is a missionary," he said. "His face and hands show what he has been through. But," said he, "Dr. Whitman, your story is all right, but after all Oregon can not be saved to the United States, because it cannot be settled from the East. You cannot take wagons over the Rocky Mountains." "Can't take wagons over the Rocky Mountains?" said Whitman. "Why, Mr. President, seven years ago I took the first wagon that ever crossed the Rocky Mountains." "Well," said President Tyler, "if you can show the accessibility of Oregon, and that the mountains can be crossed by wagons, I will see that the land isn't given to Great Britain." It was what Whitman had come for. Turning westward, with but a brief delay for a hurried trip to Boston, he led back that summer the first wagon train which ever crossed the American continent—two hundred wagons, eight hundred loyal American settlers, nearly three thousand horses and oxen—led them over the great plains, through the defiles of the mountains, past the posts of the protesting Hudson's Bay Fur Company, out into the Walla Walla valley, and the first news which the Mission had of his safety or of his success was on that morning in September, 1843, when, looking up, they saw the

long line of white-topped wagons come winding down the sides of the Blue Mountains, and presently heard the clatter of Whitman's horse hoofs as he drew rein at his own door.

No! Dr. Whitman did not ride up to the Mission on that great day when the wagon-train stopped for rest on its way to the Willamette Valley, for he had been called to Lapwai by an urgent messenger who met him at Grand Ronde and summoned him in haste to attend Mrs. Spaulding. He had left the train to an Indian guide, and did not rejoin it until after the immigrants had reached Waiilatpu, but though the dramatic climax was lacking, his work had been well done. The victory was won.

That wagon train blazed a trail across the continent so clear and broad that from that day on American settlers poured westward in an unending stream. And when at last, by treaty with Great Britain July 17, 1846, the Northwest boundary line was settled, the influence of Whitman's work had been felt, the value of Oregon was recognized, and our American statesmen claimed it for our own. The line was drawn where it now stands, at the 49th parallel, and thus the land was saved to the Union from which the three States, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, have since been formed. Into that territory you might put all of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and have enough left over to make three Connecticuts—saved to the United States *because Marcus Whitman was prophet enough to foresee the value of this country, and was hero enough to risk his life to save it.* Then he settled down, as though he had done nothing great, to take up again his work as teacher and physician.

But the signing of that treaty with Great Britain virtually meant the signing of Dr. Whitman's death warrant. The British Fur Company would never allow itself to be robbed by any one living man of such a prize as Oregon, and from the day when the news of the treaty reached the Northwest, agents of the fur company began to stir up the Indians against the Whitman Mission. Hitherto the Indians had regarded the Whitmans as their friends—as angels sent to them from heaven. They had called the doctor "the good

doctor," and had gone to him in every time of trouble. But now suspicions were planted in their minds. It was whispered to them that Dr. Whitman had a secret motive for his work; that he was trying to rob them of their lands and of their horses. In the fall of 1847 measles broke out, and Whitman treated his white patients and his Indian patients alike, but, strange as it may seem at first, his white patients recovered, while his Indian patients died. They took the same medicines, but the Indians taking his medicines would go and steep themselves in a sweat-box, a low lodge or hut of branches constructed by the edge of the river, in which they placed hot stones and poured water over them to make a steam bath. Reeking with sweat, they rushed out and jumped into the ice-cold stream. They died—no wonder!—but they were told, "Whitman has poisoned you," and they knew no better than to believe it. On the 29th of November, 1847, the plot reached its head and broke. On the afternoon of that day Dr. Whitman was indoors giving medicine to a sick Indian boy. An Indian stole through the door in moccasined feet, bearing in his hand under his blanket a hatchet. Quickly raising his arm, he struck the good doctor two blows on the back of the head. He fell to the ground with a groan, and his blood gushed out upon the bare board floor. Then the war whoop rang out, and guns were fired. Mrs. Whitman fell, pierced through the breast by a rifle bullet. She and the doctor were killed and mutilated, besides twelve others of the missionary party. The rest were carried away into a captivity which was worse than death. The Indians, in their savage lust for destruction, burned the buildings to the ground, and hacked to pieces the very orchard which Whitman had planted, leaving not a vestige of civilization to mark the spot where Whitman had lived and died.

\* \* \* \* \*

God called Marcus Whitman to the Northwest. He inspired him to save Oregon to the United States. He held him with His strong right arm. Then did He let him drop? So it seemed, for year after year rolled by, and Whitman was forgotten. The ryegrass grew upon the earthen mound where the bones of the fourteen murdered persons had been gathered. A badger burrowed into its side. The land lay desolate, given over to the coyote and the savage.



That lonely grave was the only memorial of a national hero, a martyr and an apostle.

But God works strangely. Eleven years after the massacre there came and stood by that neglected grave one who had been a friend of Marcus Whitman, and had come out to join him in his work among the Indians of Oregon. It was Cushing Eells, who, born in Massachusetts and educated at Williams College, had settled among the Spokane Indians in 1838, and had labored faithfully among them until driven out at the time of the Whitman massacre. Since then he had been preaching and teaching in southern Oregon, unable to return to the scene of his former labors. But now, in 1858, the land was opened again for settlement, and he returned at once to the grave of his friend. Standing there under the open sky, alone with God, he mused upon the life and death and services of Dr. Whitman. The power of the Most High came upon him, he declared afterwards, and he resolved that with the help of God he would consecrate the rest of his life to erecting a fitting memorial of Marcus Whitman. What should it be—a monument of stone, a tablet of brass? "No," said he, by the inspiration of God; "the fittest memorial for a man like that will be a Christian school for the education of the young people of this region." Then and there was born in his brain the idea which since has developed into Whitman College. Then and there he consecrated himself to a great undertaking.

Eells was a poor man. He had not received a salary from the Missionary Society for years. He had no friends but he had taken up a farm, and at once selling half of the farm, he gave the proceeds towards the little school. He peddled cordwood and chickens and eggs, while his wife made butter. But with all these sacrifices, it took him seven years before he could put up the first wooden building. On the 13th of October, 1866, the building, which was located at Walla Walla where a town had sprung up four miles from the grave, was thrown open for students under the principalship of Rev. P. B. Chamberlain, at that time pastor of the First Congregational Church at Walla Walla. For sixteen years the school, "Whitman Seminary," struggled on through various vicissi-

tudes. It became a College in 1883, and has grown slowly since then until today it owns ten buildings, has two hundred and fifty students, and courses which are planned for the highest and most thorough work. Its requirements for admission are now fully equal to those of Yale, Amherst and Williams.

During its early years the sacrifices of Cushing Eells were unending. He toiled and prayed and wept for it. He told the writer that when he was travelling over eastern Washington in those weary years, sleeping out at night under the trees alone with his horse, he lived on dried salmon and water at an expense of twenty-five cents a week, in order that he might save money for the College. During his lifetime he managed to scrape together \$10,000 of his own money, which he gave to the institution of his founding, and at his death, in 1893, made it his residuary legatee.

Whitman College stands today as the memorial of Marcus Whitman, the saviour of Oregon to the United States. It stands also as the incarnation of that spirit of patriotism and loyalty to truth and righteousness which have made the names of Whitman and of Eells to shine most brightly in the list of saints and martyrs. It has a magnificent opportunity to complete the work which Whitman began, of saving the land completely to the United States. For it is not enough to call that territory ours; it is not enough to snatch three shining stars from the field of heaven, and plant them in our country's flag; the land must be made truly American. It must be permeated with that spirit of loyalty and righteousness which makes a nation truly great. It is Christian education which is the safeguard of the commonwealth. Colleges make men; Christian Colleges make Christian men. The aim of Whitman College is to spread far and wide that Christian education which shall make the boys and girls of the present noble and consecrated citizens for the future. And as its past was glorious, as its founding was inspired, so its work seems providentially purposed of God, as the true consummation of the work of his apostle. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." May the blood of Marcus Whitman be the seed of a great institution which shall do great work for the land for which he died, and may Whitman College live and grow,

fulfilling ever that divine purpose which was first shown in the sending of Marcus Whitman to carry the Gospel to the Indians of Oregon Territory!



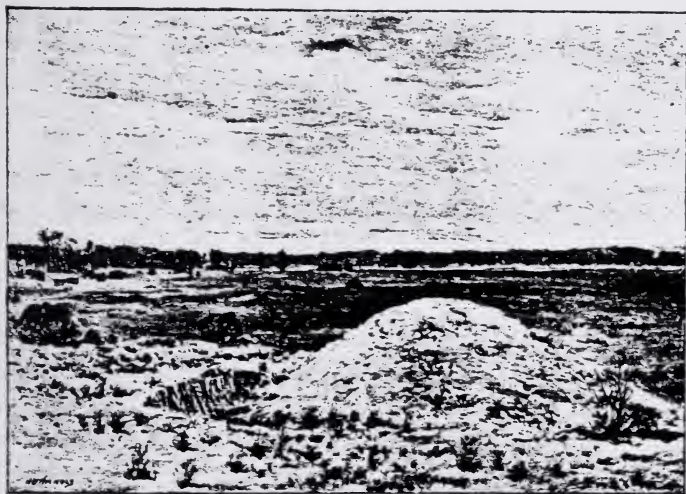
WHITMAN SEMINARY. 1866



WAILATU.—THE WHITMAN MISSION IN 1843







THE WHITMAN GRAVE IN 1858





## EDITORIAL

Twelve years have passed since the foregoing story was printed in the January, 1897, number of the WHITMAN COLLEGE QUARTERLY, and in the interim the story has been savagely attacked. The methods of a radical higher criticism have been used to overthrow it, and the smoke of an historical controversy has arisen around it. But after all the attacks which have been made upon it, the editor is willing to let it be re-published as substantially accurate still. It is not intended to be a history of the Pacific Northwest, but to be the story of Marcus Whitman and of the college which is his memorial. A detail here and there, such as the incident at Fort Walla Walla, may fade into mere tradition, but the story as a whole stands firm.

The foregoing "Whitman story" has been so much discussed within the last few years that it is well to state clearly the things which are now accepted without question in regard to Dr. Whitman. No one can deny that Dr. Whitman, in company with his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Spaulding, and W. H. Gray came overland to Oregon in 1836, and that he brought with him through the Rocky Mountains and across southern Idaho as far as Fort Boise the first wagon which had ever reached Oregon Territory. Perhaps the coming of the two American women should be regarded as quite as full of significance as the coming of that famous wagon, for their coming meant American homes and a permanent American civilization. No one can deny that as a farmer, teacher, doctor, and loyal American citizen, Dr. Whitman exerted an immense and helpful influence in the Northwest both on Indians and whites. No one can deny that in the fall of 1842 Dr. Whitman suddenly made a trip to the East at the risk of his life and returned the next summer acting as guide for the famous wagon train of 1843 which brought so large a majority of Americans into Oregon that the destiny of Oregon was thereby determined. He was killed by the Indians on November 29th, 1847, his mission being obliterated. His death made a profound impression, both because of its tragic character and because of the extraordinary personal worth of the man. He was a great heroic figure in those early pioneer days.

Now, what is the "Whitman story," so-called, which has been in controversy? Briefly, it comprises these seven points:

First, that in the early 40's Oregon was in serious danger of being lost to the United States because of the general indifference of Congress and our leading public men on the subject.

Second, that Dr. Whitman went East in 1842 for the very purpose of laying the facts concerning Oregon and its accessibility by wagons before the United States Government.

Third, that he saw President Tyler, Daniel Webster, and other prominent people and influenced them to delay the settlement of the Oregon question with Great Britain until an attempt might be made to take an American colony of settlers by wagon train to Oregon.

Fourth, that Dr. Whitman planned an immigration for the summer of 1843 and that he induced a considerable number of persons to join the wagon train of that year.

Fifth, that he was the guide and practical leader of the train, by his experience, medical skill, knowledge of the route and of human nature, and indomitable resourcefulness bringing it successfully to Oregon.

Sixth, that he prevented the settlers from abandoning their wagons and persuaded them to make the effort to bring them through to the Pacific Coast.

Seventh, that he succeeded in this undertaking, and that the wagon train of 1843 saved Oregon to the United States because it gave a majority of settlers to the United States. When the treaty with Great Britain was signed finally in 1846, the country went by agreement to the nation having the majority of settlers.

The newly published life of Marcus Whitman by Dr. Myron Eells\* throws new light on these seven points. He demonstrates from speeches in Congress, by bills introduced there, and by leading newspapers of the East that Oregon was in danger. The array of witnesses whom he cites must impress the most skeptical. In regard to Dr. Whitman's purpose in going East he gives a candid and fair investigation to the claims which were made for him by his friends

\*Marcus Whitman: Pathfinder and Patriot. By Myron Eells, D.D. The Harriman Publishing Company, Seattle, Wash. Price, \$2.70, postpaid.

and to what Dr. Whitman himself wrote on the subject. He establishes the point that Dr. Whitman's main motive in going East was patriotic, as was indicated by his going directly and immediately to Washington rather than to Boston, the office of his missionary society. Dr. Whitman probably had a two-fold motive, but his main motive was indicated by his own words in a letter written November 5, 1846, "I had adopted Oregon as my country as well as the Indians for my field of labor, so that I must superintend the immigration of that year which was to lay the foundation for the speedy settlement of the country. \* \* \* I have returned to my field of labor and on my return brought a large immigration of about one thousand individuals safely through the long and, the last part of it, an untried route to the western shores of the continent."

But what did Dr. Whitman accomplish in Washington? No one now doubts that he went there first, though once even his going was denied. The evidence as to what he accomplished is interesting. He himself claimed to have talked with President Tyler and Mr. Webster and to have persuaded President Tyler to delay action in regard to Oregon. Dr. Eells summons many important witnesses and much corroborative testimony to confirm Dr. Whitman's own story. It is a remarkable coincidence to say the least, that on November 25, 1842, Mr. Webster, our Secretary of State, wrote to Lord Aberdeen that the President would make a communication to our Minister in England upon the subject of Oregon at no distant date. When the reader remembers that Dr. Whitman arrived in Washington on March 3, 1843, he will be struck by the fact that the next letter upon the subject of Oregon from the President is dated October 9, 1843. Why did President Tyler delay for so long a time his promised communication? The Whitman story exactly fits into the gap and accounts for the delay.

The best way to settle the question whether Dr. Whitman induced many people to join the wagon train of 1843 is to ask the survivors of that train. Dr. Eells did this in 1883 and gives the names and answers of all whom he succeeded in hearing from. Over two-fifths of the survivors say that they joined the train on account of his representations, either direct or indirect. No well-informed

person has ever claimed that Dr. Whitman induced all to join.

As to Dr. Whitman's services as guide and leader, the testimony of Jesse Applegate, captain of the train, is interesting and important. In a letter dated May 29, 1876, he wrote, "Dr. Marcus Whitman

\* \* \* Oregon owes him much. He contributed more than any to the success of its first great immigration." Hon. J. W. Nesmith, of the wagon train, wrote in 1873, "Captain Grant, (of the Hudson's Bay Company) attempted to dissuade us from proceeding further with our wagons. \* \* \* Dr. Whitman was persistent in his assertion that wagons could proceed as far as the Grand Dalles of the Columbia River, from which point he asserted they could be taken down by rafts or batteaux to the Willamette Valley.

\* \* \* Happily, Whitman's advice prevailed." Mr. P. G. Stewart, of the wagon train, wrote in 1887, "Finally, I would say that if Dr. Whitman did not get up the immigration of 1843, he fetched us safely through."

The wagon train of 1843 settled the fate of Oregon. In the fall of 1840 there were one hundred thirty-seven Americans in the country, including missionaries, settlers, women and children, and in 1842 the number was not much different. In 1840 there were sixty-three Canadians in the country besides all of those who were employed by the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1841 an immigration of about eighty persons was brought by the Hudson's Bay Company from the Red River settlements at Manitoba, thus putting the British in the majority. Dr. White, in 1842, brought an immigration of one hundred thirty-seven Americans. There is reason to believe that the Hudson's Bay Company intended to bring another immigration as soon as possible. The wagon train of 1843 brought about eight hundred and seventy-five persons, including women and children, one hundred and eleven wagons, and about two thousand horses and cattle. It included two hundred and ninety-five men over sixteen years of age capable of bearing arms. It gave so great a majority to the Americans that thereafter the British seemed to have abandoned the attempt to colonize the country, and in accordance with the treaty of joint occupancy it finally passed into American possession.

## A PROPHET OF THE NAVY

It is interesting to know, in connection with the present plans for developing at Walla Walla a great private educational institution central to the Pacific Northwest, that in 1842 Commodore Wilkes made a special report to the Navy Department in which he recognized the central and strategic position of Walla Walla. In Snowden's History of Washington, volume 2, appendix 1, page 503, occur the following words in Commander Wilkes's special report received at the Navy Department on June 13, 1842:

"For the military occupation of the country I conceive that it would be necessary to establish a post at some central point, viz., Walla Walla, and I herewith enclose you a topographical sketch of the surrounding country within thirty miles. As respects its position with reference to the country, you will be well informed by the map. It appears to me to be peculiarly adapted to the general defense of the territory in order to preserve peace and quietness among the Indian tribes. The Nez Perces, Snakes, and Blackfeet are those generally engaged in committing depredations on each other and require more looking after than those of the other tribes. They are in and around this section of the country."

It is remarkable that so long ago as 1842 a statesman-sailor of the Navy should have foreseen the importance of Walla Walla from a geographical and military point of view.

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THE WHITMAN FAMILY.

The heroism and nobility of Marcus Whitman were not the result of chance. He was a member of a distinguished family which has given many honored and useful citizens to the United States. The blood of the Pilgrims flowed in his veins. Devotion to duty and love of country were his by inheritance. John Whitman had landed at Weymouth, Massachusetts, in 1634, and cast his fortunes in with the first settlers of New England. His descendants spread over the whole country, and did their part in its development. Per-



haps the most honored scions of the Whitman family, besides Dr. Marcus Whitman, were Abraham Lincoln and the late ex-Governor Russell of Massachusetts. The same blood was in them as was shed at Waiilatpu, November 29, 1847. Many other members of the family have won distinction.

Realizing that one of their most honored relatives, a martyred hero to whom three stars in the American flag are due, was lying in a forgotten grave, while the little College, his only memorial, was languishing half starved, certain members of the Whitman family issued, in June, 1895, a circular letter addressed "To the Descendants of John Whitman of Weymouth," and sent it to every known adult member of the family, some four thousand in all. The letter was signed by Dr. Whitman's nephew, Hon. Perrin B. Whitman, of Lewiston, Idaho, Prof. Henry W. Farnam, of New Haven, Conn., and Mr. John Tatlock, of New York City. It called the attention of all members of the family to the eminent services of *Dr. Marcus Whitman* to the United States, and to the propriety of making his memorial—*Whitman College*—worthy of the name. It also proposed that a Whitman family memorial fund of \$50,000 be raised among the descendants of John Whitman to assist in the endowment of the College. Could family pride have found a nobler channel?

The response to this appeal has been considerable, though by no means sufficient as yet to carry out the plan of the committee. Many members of the family were ignorant of the story; some did not know of the honorableness of their descent. It is hoped that every person claiming one drop of Whitman blood will attest his relationship to Marcus Whitman by helping to make Whitman College worthy of the name it bears.



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